

2017 National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) Dataset Report

Terrestrial Ecosystems of the Conterminous United States

Introduction:

This report aggregates information related to the National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) in the title above. In order to be designated an NGDA, the dataset must meet the criteria outlined in the Office of Management and Budget [OMB Circular A-16 Supplemental Guidance](#). The guidance also directs Federal agencies to implement and use a portfolio management approach to ensure NGDA Datasets are managed by officially designated agencies, on behalf of all users, as national capital assets. As part of this process, the NGDA Dataset Managers regularly assess the maturity of their NGDA Datasets based on the [geospatial data lifecycle](#) and agency business requirements. All NGDA Datasets are assessed uniformly using a set of benchmark questions and a maturity index. This report includes results from the 2017 Lifecycle Maturity Assessment (LMA) which will be used to inform NGDA Dataset Managers about priorities and will be aggregated into a Theme Summary Report for NGDA Theme Leads.

NGDA Dataset Details:

Official Title: Terrestrial Ecosystems of the Conterminous United States

Metadata Record Title*: [Terrestrial ecosystems of the conterminous United States](#)

Theme: Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Dataset Lead Agency: U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey

Theme Executive Champion(s):

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** If the metadata has been updated and re-harvested after publication of this report, the link may no longer be valid. The NGDA Dataset may be searched for manually in Data.gov or GeoPlatform.gov using the metadata record title.*

2017 Lifecycle Maturity Assessment (LMA)

Reporting on the status of each NGDA Dataset is an OMB requirement, and assessing the developmental maturity of the NGDA provides managers the ability to support NGDA Datasets in a more universal and transparent manner. The LMA is based on the OMB Circular A-16 seven stages of the [geospatial data lifecycle](#) with associated benchmark activities for each stage. Each benchmark has a range of activities, from no activity to significant activity, which provide the interpretation of maturity for that benchmark. The cumulative level of activity determines the maturity of the each NGDA Dataset and is based on a [Maturity Matrix](#) and [How to Calculate Maturity](#). Additional information can be found at the GeoPlatform.gov [2017 Lifecycle Maturity Assessment \(LMA\)](#) community web page.

2017 LMA Questions and Responses

The 2017 LMA includes a series of questions about the benchmark activities within each lifecycle stage, an explanation of specific actions that might be used to accomplish the benchmark activity (clarifying statements), and a series of status metrics in the form of response options. The NGDA Dataset Manager selects the response option that most accurately describes the current maturity level for the NGDA they manage. The responses to all the questions, and their associated metrics, collectively determine the overall maturity of an individual NGDA. The 2017 LMA consists of 3 general questions and 20 maturity questions. An additional 12 questions justify response choices to the 20 maturity questions. The questions are organized across the seven stages of the [geospatial data lifecycle](#) or pertain to all lifecycle stages. The detailed 2017 LMA questions can be found in the [National Geospatial Dataset Asset 2017 Lifecycle Maturity Assessment](#) document.

General Questions for All Stages

0) Part 1: Is this dataset considered "active" or "static"?

Response: The dataset is considered static but is the best available resource - the dataset is unlikely to be updated again, other than normal error correction and archiving processes

Justification: Dataset meets criteria described for static; unchanged since previous LMA, and not maintained in a formal data management sense.

0) Part 2: For the 2017 LMA, please provide what time frame the assessment includes?

Response: For an NGDA that completed the baseline assessment, responses include dataset activities from 2015 to 2017

0) Part 3: Do you have a process to evaluate the dataset to determine if it continues to meet the criteria established for a National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA)?

Response: Yes

1) Is there a recurring process to obtain funding for all lifecycle stages of this dataset?

Response: No process to obtain funding exists (Please explain)

Justification: There is no process to obtain funding for this static resource

3) Are there processes and tools in place so that staff are sufficiently knowledgeable to ensure the continuity of the dataset for all stages of the lifecycle, especially during staffing transition?

Response: Implementation well established

STAGE 1 - Define/Plan

Characterization of data requirements based upon business-driven user needs.

4) Are business requirements defined and formalized?

Response: No business requirements are defined (Please explain)

Justification: This resource was developed for a scientific audience and did not require elaboration of a business

plan. Agency requirements identified the need for the work: ...rigorous, standardized, geospatial classification models and maps of national ecosystems at scales appropriate to land-manager needs...

(Source, 2007-2017 USGS Science Strategy, Circular 1309, page 8)

5) Are there processes in place to ensure partners and stakeholders are involved in requirements collection?

Response: No processes in place (Please explain)

Justification: Partners/stakeholders were drawn from the USGS and NGO (NatureServe) ecosystems geography community. No formal stakeholder identification process or solicitation of stakeholder input from outside of this group was implemented.

6) Is there a quality assurance process for the dataset?

Response: Implementation well established

6.a) To justify your response to Question 6, what methods are used to develop and complete quality assurance assessments?

Internal quality assurance assessment - A defined review process is undertaken by agency personnel through quality evaluation, testing, or other manual or automated methods

Other - The dataset was compliant with agency information quality directives.

<http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/pp1768>

7) Has an assessment been done to evaluate the sensitivity, privacy, and confidentiality of this dataset?

Response: Implementation well established

8) Are defined data standards used in collecting, processing, and/or rendering the data?

Response: Implementation well established

8.a) To justify your response to Question 8, what types of data standards are used in collection, processing, and/or rendering the data?

FGDC-endorsed standards in use: FGDC, CSDGM, Esri template

STAGE 2 - Inventory/Evaluate

The creation and publication of a detailed list of data assets and data gaps (both internal and external) as they relate to business-driven user need.

9) Is an assessment done to determine if data necessary to meet requirements already exists from other sources (either within or outside the agency) before collecting or acquiring new data?

Response: Implementation well established

9.a) To justify your response to Question 9, what actions are performed to determine if data already exists from other sources?

Internal research and evaluation - The lead federal agency conducts research to identify whether other potential sources and datasets exist, including GeoPlatform.gov Marketplace research

Other - The leader and the resource development team contemplated existing national terrestrial ecosystem datasets prior to development of a new concept and approach for a data-derived, top down, deductive ecosystem model.

STAGE 3 - Obtain

The collection, purchase, conversion, transformation, sharing, exchanging, or creation of geospatial data that were selected to meet the business needs is identified.

10) Is there a process for obtaining data for this dataset?

Response: Fully implemented including recurring assessments

10.a) To justify your response to Question 10, what actions are performed to obtain data?

Obtain data by sharing/exchanging

Other - All input data were obtained as authoritative government data layers from agencies. There is no need for collection of additional data and therefore no ongoing data collection process.

11) Is the metadata in an FGDC-endorsed geospatial metadata standard, follows the NGDA Metadata Guidelines, and is published?

Response: Published and implementation of NGDA Metadata Guidelines well established

12) Part 1: Is there a business process in place to determine the geographic coverage of the dataset and establish milestones to track progress towards completion?

Response: Implementation well established

12) Part 2: Based on the business requirements, what is the estimated completeness of the geographic coverage?

Response: Geographic coverage is fully complete (100%) based on business requirements

12.a) To justify your response to Question 12 Part 2, what is the geographic coverage of the dataset as defined by the business requirements?

Response: US 48 contiguous States (All) - Geographic coverage is the entire surface of the 48 contiguous States at the applicable resolution(s)

STAGE 4 - Access

Making data produced known and retrievable to the community through documentation and discovery mechanisms so the users can meet their business requirements.

13) Do you provide users access to the data in a digital machine-readable format?

Response: Fully implemented including recurring assessments

13.a) To justify your response to Question 13, what types of digital machine-readable formatted web services or data download services are available for this dataset?

Esri Grid format

STAGE 5 - Maintain

The ongoing processes and procedures to ensure that the data meet business requirements.

14) Is there a maintenance process in place for this dataset?

Response: Fully implemented including recurring assessments

15) Is there a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) process as part of this dataset's maintenance?

Response: No process is in place (Please explain)

Justification: Initially and for about 5 years, users were invited to submit comments back to the team on accuracy

and utility of data. This user-feedback mechanism is no longer available after a recent redesign of the webpage, given the age of the resource and the relative lack of comments received. Users can still contact any of the PIs associated with the dataset through a Contact Us link on the web page.

STAGE 6 - Use/Evaluate

The ongoing assessment, validation, and potential enhancement of data to meet user needs and business requirements.

16) Is there a process to determine if the dataset meets user needs?

Response: No process exists (Please explain)

Justification: Data were not developed in response to a set of user requirements from a community of stakeholders.

Data were produced as a scientific collaboration between a federal agency and an NGO to advance scientific understanding of terrestrial ecosystem distributions. The data certainly met the agency need and 10 year strategy recommendation to advance national ecosystem mapping.

17) Is there a process to provide users information on how to evaluate and properly use the dataset?

Response: Implementation well established

18) Do the business processes and management practices include an assessment of changing technology?

Response: Implementation well established

STAGE 7 - Archive

Facilitate the selection/appraisal retention, storage, preservation and accessibility of geospatial content with long-term value (or the disposition of material as appropriate) and establish mechanisms for the coordinated development of stewardship tools and services across all impacted Federal agencies.

19) Is there an archiving appraisal process for the dataset?

Response: Fully implemented including recurring assessments

19.a) To justify your response to Question 19, where is digital data being archived as determined by your appraisal process outcome?

Other - The data are ftp available on a government server, and are intended to be ftp available in perpetuity at <http://rmgsc.cr.usgs.gov/outgoing/ecosystems/USdata/>

19.b) To justify your response to Question 19, where is printed data being archived as determined by your appraisal process outcome?

No printed data is available to archive for this dataset

Other - The related printed publication is available in pdf format in the USGS Publications Warehouse.

LMA Submission and Reviewer Information

LMA Submission:

Status: Complete

Date: 7/28/2017

Submitted by:

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Reviewed by:

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Email: mmcniff@usgs.gov

Date: 28-Jul-17

LMA Maturity Overview

Each of the 20 maturity question responses was assigned a maturity level based on a [Maturity Matrix](#). The maximum level of maturity (Optimized; Established) is level (5) and the least level of maturity (No Activity) is level (0). The question response maturity was then averaged across each lifecycle stage to determine the stage maturity as described in [How to Calculate Maturity](#). The table below shows the numerical maturity levels with their corresponding descriptions and characteristics.

Maturity	Maturity Characteristics for All Lifecycle Stages
Optimized; Established Level = 5	Dataset meets virtually all business needs of all users. The dataset is considered authoritative by owners and secondary users. It is curated across all stages of the approved lifecycle. Future needs are defined for both the primary owner and secondary users on a regular basis and resources for addressing both current and future business requirements are available.
Mature; Consistent Level = 4	Dataset meets all the business needs of the primary owner and most of the secondary users. The dataset is curated and used as an authoritative resource by the primary owner and secondary users. Future needs are being identified and steps are planned to address these. All stages are supported and reviewed on a recurring basis. The dataset is well managed in relation to the approved lifecycle.
Managed; Predictable Level = 3	Dataset meets a significant number of the business needs of the primary owner and is widely used by secondary users. Benchmark activities are occurring in at least four of the approved lifecycle stages. Management practices in relation to the approved lifecycle is moderate but consistent. Dataset is integrating changing business requirements in lifecycle stages impacting overall maturity.
Transition; Transformation Level = 2	Dataset meets business needs of the primary owner and has moderate use by secondary users. Benchmark activities are occurring in at least three stages. Efforts to integrate funding, include partners, and obtain data are not supported in a sustained manner. Management practices in relation to the stages of the approved lifecycle is limited.
Planned; Initial Development Level = 1	Dataset in initial planning or limited in meeting business needs of the primary owner. Benchmark activities in the approved lifecycle are just starting to consider secondary uses, Partners/stakeholders involvement is being defined and developed to support additional dataset uses. Dataset development is in a very early stage. Minimal or limited management against the benchmarks in the approved lifecycle.
No Activity Level = 0	Dataset not developed or meets project/local business needs of the primary owner. Secondary, additional uses, or partners/stakeholders were not considered. Dataset is not recognized as authoritative data or is part of a similar dataset. Not managed to any of the benchmarks in the approved lifecycle.

Table 1: 2017 Maturity Matrix.

2017 NGDA Dataset Maturity Results

Based on the maturity question responses, an overall maturity level was calculated for this NGDA, along with maturity calculations for the general questions for all stages and each discrete lifecycle stage as shown in Table 2 below.

Maturity Categories	Maturity Level
Overall NGDA Maturity	3 - Managed; Predictable
General Questions for All Stages	3 - Managed; Predictable
Stage 1: Plan/Define	2 - Transition; Transformation
Stage 2: Inventory/Evaluate	4 - Mature; Consistent
Stage 3: Obtain	5 - Optimized; Established
Stage 4: Access	5 - Optimized; Established
Stage 5: Maintain	3 - Managed; Predictable
Stage 6: Use/Evaluate	3 - Managed; Predictable
Stage 7: Archive	5 - Optimized; Established

Table 2: 2017 Maturity Results.

LMA Process Changes Between 2015 and 2017

In 2015, a baseline assessment of National Geospatial Data Assets (NGDA) was performed for each of the NGDA Datasets in the federal geospatial portfolio. Information related to the 2015 baseline LMA can be found at [2015 NGDA Lifecycle Maturity Assessment](#), which also includes a link to the 2015 Reports. A follow up analysis of the 2015 LMA baseline process and its results identified ways to improve the LMA workflow, increase efficiency as well as decrease reporting burden. Several recommendations were identified and implemented in 2017, which included improvements to normalize the responses in 2017. A secondary effect of improvements to normalization is that results from 2017 and 2015 are not directly comparable. These changes, and their impacts, are detailed in the webpage: [Temporal Changes in Lifecycle Maturity Assessment \(LMA\) Maturity and Results Comparisons](#).